CHAPTER III

DISTRIBUTION

John C. Fremont made several contacts with the Washo Indians in January and February of 1844. He described a custom that reveals the essence of Washo economic distribution (Nevins 1956, 345-352).

"A party of twelve Indians came down from the mountains to trade pinenuts, of which each carried a little bag. These seemed now to be staple of the country, and whenever we met an Indian, his friendly salutation consisted in offering a few nuts to eat and to trade..."

And later "...when we reached a little affluent to the river at the bottom we suddenly found ourselves in presence of eight or ten Indians...Our friendly demeanor reconciled them and when we got near enough they immediately stretched out to us handfuls of pinenuts, which seemed an exercise of hospitality."

Gifts, as Fremont experienced, were part of everyday social intercourse among the Washo. Gifts were given in connection with births, puberty ceremonies, marriages, and deaths. As Fremont indicates, gifts also served to establish contact with strangers and to initiate trade.

In the quantitative terms of distributing total Washo production of goods and services, gift exchange was not very important. It was in the sphere of ideal values that gift exchange became important.

The value of sharing and of giving found expression in most of Washo economic distributions. Sharing (mib¢shigihi) obtained at every level of Washo social organization. Sharing also decreased as kinship and residence distances increased. Non-Washo received the least of Washo sharing and yet Fremont and his party, although total strangers, were met with gifts and the invitation to trade. The person who would not share with others of the same household, or who was generally stingy (hut¢ tiki) would not be included in the networks of sharing and might be "talked out" of his household.

With various qualities of the transactions as our criteria, eight forms of economic distribution stand out in Washo society. These eight forms can be analysed in terms of the extent of "primary" and "secondary" social relations involved in each. Primary refers to relations between people with common goals and relations that are ends in themselves, intrinsically valued, "personal" in that the identity of the individuals cannot be changed without disturbing the relationship, "inclusive" in that the range or involvement

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of the relationship is wide, and "spontaneous" in being relatively uninhibited (Davis 1949). Secondary relations are at the other end of the continuum: extrinsic, impersonal, exclusive, and inhibited.

The eight forms of economic distribution as they occur in Washo society can be ordered along this continuum from primary to secondary: (1) ceremonial disposal, (2) familial sharing, (3) task group sharing, (4) gift and ceremonial exchange, (5) feasts, (6) payment for services, (7) gambling, and (8) trade.

In terms of the socio-economic groups involved, only two - familial sharing and task group sharing - are essentially concerned with economic production. The other six are concerned with distribution. This gives us the dichotomy of "producing groups" and "distributing groups". The distribution involved in producing groups takes the general form of sharing (weak reciprocity), while the distribution in distributing groups takes the general form of an exchange (strong reciprocity).

On the basis of a hypothetical breakdown of the total distribution of all economic goods and services in Washo economy we can order these forms on a continuum from the quantitatively most important to the least important: (1) familial sharing, (2) task group sharing, (3) gift and ceremonial exchange, (4) feasts, (5) gambling, (6) trade, (7) payment for services, and (8) ceremonial disposal. Other forms of distribution such as theft (*lamamshawi*, "thief"), lost (pa) and found (ipu), and the spoils of war did occur but were not important enough to be discussed here.

The following outline presents a few of the qualities of these eight forms of distribution as they appear in Washo society and in the order they will be discussed in the following section of this chapter.

"Primary" Distribution

1. Familial Sharing: based on division of labor by sex and age in the household; quantitatively most important. [462] [592]
2. Task Group Sharing: based on the breakdown of products from producing groups larger than the household.
3. Gift and Ceremonial Exchange: strong reciprocity: social status primary; connected with hospitality and life cycle events. [554]
4. Feasts: an abundance of food distributed by kin, task, or communal group. [574]
5. Ceremonial Disposal: based on supernatural beliefs.

"Secondary" Distribution

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[525]
[439]

6. Gambling: economic competition via games of chance and skill.

7. Trade: immediate reciprocation and explicit negotiation.

8. Payment for Services: dispensing of "secondary" socio-economic debts.

Familial Sharing

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Familial sharing is characterized by distributions resulting from the division of labor by sex and age. This system accounted for roughly 70%-90% of all Washo economic distribution. The importance of the various channels for the flow of goods fluctuated seasonally and regionally, but the internal family system always predominated. Familial sharing pertained to relations in the household but was extended as a general value to include all of humanity. With the exception of gambling, trade, and some payment for services, all the major distribution systems in Washo economy appear to be derived from familial sharing. That is, they appear as extensions of the primary relations found foremost in the family.

Familial sharing is not considered an exchange in the economic sense because of the special character of the reciprocity. It has the quality of the true gift. That is, the return of an economic good or service is not required. Children, for example, may never be in a position to repay their parents with economic goods. The case wherein the producer consumes his own production immediately without actually pooling or sharing is here included under familial sharing.

Reciprocation may come in non-economic forms such as the attribution of status or religious services. In familial sharing there is often no reciprocation from others at all. The sharing may be in the form of a cultural prescription, unreasonable for an "economic man", but nevertheless done: a ritual, conservative, habitual form.

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Since familial sharing was so important, we should understand something of the household or domestic unit, particularly its composition, relations with other households, and its annual round of activities. A reconstruction of the composition of fifteen households in existence between 1885 and 1900 showed a range in number of individuals from three to thirteen and a mean number of seven individuals.[1] The household usually consisted of a core family

1. This research is summarized on pp. 8-10.

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a new area. In effect the net owner would receive a number of rabbits in proportion to the length of his net because he and his household would collect the rabbits that came into his net, a section of the combined nets. The drivers would receive only those rabbits they killed before they reached the nets, but the drivers usually belonged to a household that had a net. These drives are reported to have brought in thousands of rabbits.

[756] [622] [223]

Antelope drives were organized by a shaman leader who received more of the meat than the drivers because of his special service in charming the animals. Drives for ducklings and mud hens sometimes involved two or three households and the catch was always divided equally. Duckling drives are apparently the only times when tule boats were used. Washoe Lake was the major place for duckling drives.

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Fishing activities were organized on a small scale. Most fish were taken by spearing, often from fish blinds built over a section of the stream. One method was to divert small streams (dum¢¢sh) and pick up the stranded fish. Another method used a basketry fish trap anchored in a narrow spot on a stream.

[592] [476]

In addition there were fish drives using dams (imbeshuk)[1] or fish nets (atabi digush). The drives usually involved only a single household, but occasionally individuals from more than one household would work together in driving the fish, often with a large bundle of willow branches (b¢l¢shi) that was pushed along (Freed n.d.). The work of diverting a stream often involved members of more than one household, but in any case the division of products was approximately equal according to the number of adult workers. Men did most of the fishing, but there was no opposition to women fishing as there was to women hunting. Downs (1961, 381) said "Fishing appears to be far less subject to ritualization among the Washo than was hunting."

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Pinenut gathering was organized to some degree on a tribal wide basis. There were traditional gathering strips for the various households. Prayers and ritual were given for the whole pinenut crop before gathering began at the fall pinenut festival (tagum gumsabay?). Distribution of the pinenut crop depended primarily on the amount of work put in, while location of a household's gathering strips (dimasha) was of only minor importance.

[782] [788]

Gift and Ceremonial Exchange

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Gift and ceremonial exchange was characterized by being personal, friendly, and by increasing in volume with the intensity of social ties. The reciprocity

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1. Fremont saw these in January of 1844 among the Northern Paiute and Washo (Nevins 1956, 343).

involved in gift and ceremonial exchange was culturally defined in specific ways and had more of a ritual quality than familial sharing. The transfer of goods between households in setting up a marriage involved a formal sequence of gift and counter-gift that might go on for over a year. It involved a stronger demand for reciprocity than familial sharing and in some cases had the characteristics of trade. The negotiation, however, was implicit and not directly verbalized as it is in trade.

Gift and ceremonial exchange is, in economic terms an "exchange" while familial sharing and task group sharing are not. There tended to be a time lapse between the giving of a gift and a return gift. The gift was usually accepted without question of its value. Social status was a primary factor in gift and ceremonial exchange.

It was in connection with the life cycle events of birth, puberty, marriage, and death that gift and ceremonial exchange became customary and highly integrated with social ritual. Birth and puberty were also occasions for fasting and exercise of food taboos. These are two customs that should be included in any analysis of food distribution. The taboo on meat and salt occurred at these times and at every menstruation while salt was never considered good for children.

Childbirth among the Washo was a long and arduous affair involving fasting for both parents and extensive gift giving. A midwife prepared a bed with woven sagebrush bark mat over warm sand. If the child was in a poor position for delivery the midwife manipulated the child within the mother. As the delivery was being effected usually one or two women came in to help. A buckskin belt was tied around the mother above the child and the belt was worked down by pressure in rhythm with the birth movements. As the child was being born the midwife recited a short exhortation to the child: "Hurry up and come out so I can see you."

The umbilical cord was cut by the midwife about four inches from the child's abdomen and then tied with string or sinew one inch from the child's abdomen. Following this was the washing of the baby, the careful burial of the afterbirth, and intricate care of the mother. The mother was given the sap of the sugarpine dissolved in warm water and massaged with a greasy salve. The mother abstained from eating meat, fat, or salt for a period of a month after the child was born. She could not eat anything but a thin pine-nut soup, and she could not be washed until the umbilical cord fell from the child, a period of about four days. At the end of her period in bed, usually nine or ten days, the mother bathed, painted herself, and gave away her old clothes.

The baby was wrapped in furs and placed on a sagebrush bark mat in a temporary cradle. A new temporary cradle was used after each bath.

Washo NT20
Achomawi N55

CULTURE ELEM. DISTRIB.: XIV—STEWART: NORTHERN PAIUTE

	To	K1	K2	Ka	To	To	Pa	Ba	At	Sa	Ty	Wa	K1	AF
2143. Temporary large organization: for annual dance	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
2144. For rabbit drive	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
2145. For antelope drive	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
2147. For mud-hen (or duck) drive	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
2148. For pine-nut trip	+	+	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+
Chiefs (wohoavi or voimavi)														
2149. Band chief (tuvini-voimavi) (leader of named and localized group)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2150. Patrilineal succession	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	–	–	–	–	–	–
2151. Community approval required	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	–
2152. Chief's assistant	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
2153. Chief's announcer (mavoimaxmo)	–	+	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	+	+	+	–
2154. Chief's messenger	+	+	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2155. Special chief: for dance (nugwa voimavi)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
2156. For rabbit drive (kumovoimavi)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2157. For antelope drive (tumavoimavi)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2158. For mud-hen (or duck) drive (saiyavoimavi)	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	–	+	–	+	+	+	+
2159. For fishing	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2160. For hunting generally	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2161. For pine-nut trip	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2162. Village chief	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
PROPERTY														
2165. Band owned hunting territory	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2165a. Band owned valley in which lived	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2166. Band owned pine-nut territory	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	–	–	–	–	+
2166a. Individuals owned pine-nut territory	+	+	+	–	–	–	+	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2167. Band owned fishing streams	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	–
2168. Disputes settled by fight	+	–	–	–	–	+	–	–	+	+	–	–	–	–
2169. Family owned seed plots	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	+	–	–	–	–
2170. Family owned fishing place	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	–	–	–	–	–
2171. Chattels all privately owned	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2172. All destroyed at death	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2172. Eagle aeries privately owned	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	–	+	+	+
2173a. Cold springs public	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2173b. Hot springs public	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
WARFARE														
2174. Raids only	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+
2174a. Protection only	+	+	+	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2175. Warfare rare	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2176. War ritual	+	+	–	–	–	–	–	+	–	–	–	–	–	–
2177. Captives	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	–	–	–	–	–	+
BIRTH CUSTOMS														
2178. Moleskin, stuffed, for charm (sex, gambling)	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	–	+	–	+	+	–	+
2179. Special house for childbirth	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
2179a. Dwelling-like	–	–	–	+	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2180. Domed willow house	–	–	–	+	–	–	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	–
2180a. Regular house	+	+	–	–	+	+	+	+	–	–	–	–	–	–
2181. Confinement (no. of days): 22	–	+	+	+	+	+	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2181a. 30 ("month")	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	–
2182. Ground smeared	–	–	–	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2183. Ground covered with grass, bark	+	+	–	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

[p. 407]

14:Stewart E-5 (1936-1938)1944 NR13 Northern Paiute NR13
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does not introduce some change." Except for the survival within the cult of the aboriginal ideas concerning the power of songs and concerning witchcraft, other distinctive features of the Washo-Paiute cult can be attributed to Ben Lancaster. His reason for changing the cult is clear: expediency, to facilitate its introduction and to maintain complete control for his own financial benefit.

REACTIONS OF PEOPLE

Although only a relatively small number ever espoused peyotism,[47] its effect on the group is considerable, for peyotists and nonpeyotists alike are caught in a mesh of experiences, prejudices, and gossip, which leads to new interests and suspicions, accompanied by every degree of vituperation or praise. The vehemence of divergent opinions causes a distinct rift in Washo-Paiute communities. Old friends and neighbors are separated, families broken up. Old John Walker (W,2) grieves because his son will not bring his grandson to see him; Sam Dick is accused of calling Old John a witch. Leanna Tom (P,5) and Ennie Cornbread (W,9) refuse to associate with their unconverted daughters, and Ennie persuaded another daughter to leave her disapproving husband. A family, such as that of Ben James (W,2), whose members remain on speaking terms when only part attend meetings, is rare. Whole communities are divided. Half the residents of Dresslerville presented a signed petition to the Indian agent asking that meetings be prohibited on Indian communal land.[48] In the letter attached, Hank Pete said, "If the peyote meeting continues much longer, we will all be enemies." Sam Dick, confident of supernatural protection for peyotists, suggested that the members and nonmembers line up and "shoot it out." Failing to secure official assistance, opponents got drunk and forcibly stopped all meetings in or near Gardnerville, discouraging meetings in Carson Valley in the summer and fall of 1938. Moreover, mob action has been used or threatened in most communities until now the places of impending meetings are kept from nonmembers. This practice of nonintercourse and suspicion might easily interfere with community effort, such as that proposed under the Reorganization Act."

An interesting by-product of this social dichotomy is the revival of a belief in witchcraft. Although Ben Lancaster refers to God, Jesus, and Peyote as the rulers of the universe, he fosters a belief in other powers by insisting that peyote destroys or removes them. Each peyotist, of course, denies he has any personal power, considering himself protected by God's power, which peyote directs for his benefit. Nonpeyotists, however, hearing talk of power, accuse devotees individually of causing trouble, especially sickness, through witchcraft. Washo shamans have been busy

[47] Carson Agency: 5 per cent; Indians in villages where meetings were held: 14 per cent. See Appendix III for full statistics.

[48] This petition, in the Carson Agency file, is dated April 20, 1937, and carries signatures of 75 Washo Indians. Four of the signers changed their opinions and were active members in November, 1938. Some Yankton Sioux and Goshute also petitioned the Federal Government to put a stop to the cult on their reservations.

[49] A schism such as that which developed in Washo-Paiute society, due to divergent attitudes, is not unique in American Indian history, but since ethnographers usually do not record opposition to cults, it is not surprising to find only scant mention of others. Du Bois (pp. 23–24) records, "Undoubtedly, factors for resistance among the Yurok were strong enough to cause a schism in Yurok society for the duration of the [1870] Ghost Dance." Gifford (p. 369) found that only about a third of the Clear Lake Pomo participated in the Maru phase of 1870 Ghost Dance, "thus bearing out the informant's statement that many individuals disliked the maru ceremonies." Parsons' description (p. 67) of the situation at Taos illustrates the social results of opposing views regarding peyote. A dangerous feud has developed because the pueblo officers raided a peyote meeting in 1921 and took the shawls and blankets of the devotees. The unfriendly council ordered the payment of $25 for the return of each piece of the confiscated property, but after eighteen years this property is still unclaimed and is a source of much local discord. Another time, the American courts were resorted to, when a Taos governor fined peyotists from $700 to $1000 for singing a song.

14:Stewart E-5 (1936-1938)1944 NR13 Northern Paiute NR13
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protecting and treating patients diagnosed as "infected by peyote" or some illness sent by a "peyote boy." Members have also increased their belief in sorcery through personal interpretations of their own hallucinations. Seven members thought their visions were of individuals causing sickness and death, and fellow converts believed these interpretations. Although peyotists usually thought of opponents as witches, one inactive believer was so branded. This came to light when one of Willie Smokey's friends finally agreed to name publicly the persons who had accused him of causing the death of one member and the illness of another through use of "devil power." Miss Bowler, superintendent of the Carson Agency, invited me to the conference at which accused, accusers, witnesses, and a "victim" were present. The witness said Sam Dick had charged Willie Smokey with witching in a meeting attended by Ben. Sam insisted he was being falsely accused, "just like Jesus was," that he loved his cousin Willie Smokey and always prayed for him. Ben denied teaching or believing that anyone could harm anyone else or that such was part of the peyote religion. He admitted, however, that such beliefs existed, even among peyotists, attributing their presence to weakness; maintained that he preached that all should be brothers. Miss Bowler, nevertheless, charged him with full responsibility to correct specifically and immediately his followers' wrong ideas." A danger in such situations is that some fanatic might decide to shoot the accused person, for old Washo culture contains both the pattern for witches and for killing them in revenge or for safety."

A few converts accuse fellow members of evil use of individual powers, which are said to be retained by partial use or misuse of peyote. In visions Dewey Charles (P,8) saw some old Indians who had falsely joined peyotism trying to kill younger Indians, especially "lighter-colored ones." Sam Dick accuses Jim Street, and likewise several accuse Sam Dick.

In spite of some personal jealousies, Washo-Paiute active peyotists form a closely united minority. Increased travel throughout the area of distribution has taken place. Where formerly the gambling ground was the scene of nearly all social contact, peyotists now visit each other in their homes and gather at night to learn and practice the special peyote songs, united by their new ideology and by the resentment of outsiders toward it. At Leevining, near Mono Lake, converts built a new settlement away from their neighbors and near the highway where winter snows would not keep them from meetings. Several families who formerly were not friendly have united in this group.

To many members the cult represents the return to a real native faith, containing the teachings of all religions in an understandable Indian form. Indian foods--acorn mush, piñon-nut mush, jack rabbit, fish—are considered preferable for religious meals; consequently, there has been increased use of old Indian foods by peyotists, and some young people have tasted this aboriginal fare for the first time."

Since Shoshone, Paiute, and Washo attend meetings together, English is the principal language spoken, and several desire to improve their English so their prayers will "sound good." Sam Dick affirms he hardly spoke English until he joined the cult." This close association of Shoshone, Paiute, and Washo is new, for

" Opler reports (1936, 166) bloody feuds and reprisals arising from witchcraft among Mescalero peyotists, which Indians asked Agency officials to stop.

" Lowie, 1939, 318–321.

" Practices comparable to the increased use of aboriginal food, visiting, and song practices among the Washo-Paiute were not found in the literature, but from my own experience I know all were stimulated by peyote among the Ute and Goshute.

" La Barre mentions (p. 113) the "use of English as a lingua franca," facilitating the spread of peyote.

14:Stewart E-5 (1936-1938)1944 NR13 Northern Paiute NR13
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even where Washo and Paiute occupy the same colony, as in Reno, peyotists and nonpeyotists are not friendly and keep to opposite ends of the street."

The unification of peyotists into a small vigorous minority roundly denounced by the majority of Washo-Paiute is one of the most significant features in this acculturation study." To understand it, let us review the opposing opinions and attempt to ascertain their foundations. To learn the bases for the different reactions to the new cult, direct questions were asked. Although individuals may have basic, even subconscious, psychological compulsions which are not exposed by this procedure, we do obtain a valuable understanding of the forces operative in opinion formation. Asking peyotists and nonpeyotists why they believe as they do reveals that the reasons for and against the cult fall into the same categories. Almost every explanation in its support has a counterpart in the statements of the opposition. They can be arranged under medical, religious, ethical, prestige, and economic reasons for acceptance and rejection. Kinship and desire for social contacts also aided the diffusion.

As might be expected from the fact that peyotism was first presented and widely advertised as a curing ritual, the greatest number of arguments in its favor have to do with its therapeutic value. Thirty-seven peyotists told me of more than fifty cures supposedly effected by peyote. Seventeen types were enumerated, ranging from cuts, colds, and headaches to goiter, rheumatism, and tuberculosis, whooping cough, blindness, and hemorrhoids. To the believers, peyote, "just like X-ray," reveals the location of the malignancy and, in some cases, the progress toward recovery.

Distrust of government doctors, nurses, and hospitals, and faith in shamans contributed to this belief in peyote.[a] Nonmembers, however, fear hospitals as much as do peyotists, some of whom do go to hospitals at times.[b] Most protracted illnesses for which peyote is used have been treated also by white doctors and Indian shamans. Even many nonpeyotists believe that peyote may cure in some cases, shamans in others, and that sometimes even government doctors succeed where others fail. Joe Green considers himself a shaman regardless of participation in peyote meetings, and Tom Mitchell (P,4) "doctors" his wife between meetings. To Joe, peyote is more potent than his shamanistic power, although analogous, just as peyotism is better than Protestantism, although similar."

Opposition to peyote on "medical" grounds takes the form of two beliefs: that peyote causes insanity, and that it actually causes death. Forty-five Indians told me they resist peyote because it leads to permanent insanity. Joaquin Brown's crimes and derangement are cited by Indians from Nixon to Fish Springs (beyond Bishop) in Owens Valley.

When Joaquin espoused peyotism, he did so with the enthusiasm he probably dis-

[a] The unification of intertribal peyotists in western Nevada and eastern California appears analogous to the Plains practice of intertribal meetings. La Barre states (p. 60) that "at a Shawnee leader's meeting at McCloud there were 12 Kickapoo, 6 Shawnee, 2 Caddo, 2 Kiowa, 2 whites, 1 Wichita, 1 Seminole, 1 Sauk and Fox, 1 Oto, 1 Potowatomi, and 1 Negro."

[b] See Appendix III for statistics.

[c] Reported in U. S. Senate Hearings, 1932, 18131–18141, 18202.

[d] Willie Smokey went to the hospital when he was most active in the cult. Sam Dick's wife Ida was in the hospital in November, 1938, with bladder trouble. Joe Green was at the hospital for trachoma treatments in June, 1939.

[e] Peyote's appeal on the Plains was also curing. La Barre, 43, states that "doctoring . . . in a majority of cases is the expressed purpose of calling a meeting," and that "peyote doctoring has been the occasion many times for the spread of peyotism from tribe to tribe." Radin, 1914, 12, found that among the Winnebago "Rave relied principally for new converts upon the knowledge of this great curative virtue of the peyote." Schultes, 1938, 704, states that in the Plains "the medical reputation of peyote has been fundamental in the establishment, spread, and, to some extent, in the maintenance of the peyote cult."

14:Stewart E-5 (1936-1938)1944 NR13 Northern Paiute NR13
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with them. Nonetheless, 30 informants are averse to peyotism on grounds that Ben is "robbing the Indians."

A significant economic argument against peyotism is neglect of farms and cattle and lost employment because of excessive devotion to religion. In the first months of Ben's proselyting, from two to four meetings were often held on as many consecutive nights and fanaticism kept some away from their responsibilities.

Members say that shamans and gambling-house proprietors probably dislike the cult because it takes away some of their clientele.[a] Two who temporarily joined the peyote religion were known to be hypochondriacs, one a steady customer of shamans, the other a frequent inmate of the hospital. Gamblers would be expected to resist a religion which held all-night meetings on Saturday nights. Moreover, it is suggested that bootleggers instigated some antagonism.

Kinship, friendship, and the satisfaction derived from a sociable in-group were also important factors contributing to the spread and growth of peyotism.[b] Just as real or assumed blood relationship and friendship facilitated Ben's introduction of the cult, family ties were important in increasing and holding members. An examination of the list in Appendix IV shows that most active peyotists have kinsfolk in the cult. However, this list also shows enough close relatives of members to be apostates or actively opposed to void any generalization that kinship wholly determines participation. Although only a few designate the pleasure of singing and meeting together as a reason for attendance, the enthusiastic preparation of gourd rattles, fans, etc., and the almost nightly singing practices indicate that the desire for social contact helps to convert and hold the Indians to peyotism.[c]

The basis for arguments of both peyotists and nonpeyotists is unverified opinion, wishful thinking, conscious or unconscious distortion of facts. Because of one or two apparently miraculous recoveries members attribute to peyote the power to cure all illness. Desiring to get well or to have their friends or families healed, they are prepared to accept excuses for failures. Opponents, on the other hand, blame peyote for the few deaths which followed attendance at rituals, maintaining peyote is a poison and that all users meet untimely ends. Opponents insist that peyotism is not a religion at all, but a congregation of narcotic addicts disguising their true purpose in order to avoid legal interference. To the members, however, peyotism is a religion, and it is extremely difficult, when listening to their prayers, to doubt their complete sincerity. So the argument swings on each point. Each side has as much truth as the other. Through associations and chance, these people choose what to believe.

DISCUSSION OF DIFFUSION

Whenever the diffusion of native religions has been studied, two theories, singly or combined, have been used to explain the phenomenon. The first, the cultural compatibility theory, postulates that new institutions will be acceptable to a people

[a] Parsons' account (pp. 67–68, 118–119) of opposition to peyote at Taos shows similar motivation: "The practice of . . . the outstanding shaman of the town is interfered with by peyote doctoring. I surmise that it was not until Porfirio realized the danger of this competition that the active opposition to the cult developed."

[b] Kinship and friendship facilitated the diffusion of the 1870 Ghost Dance, as well as the peyote cult. Du Bois reports (p. 135) intertribal marriages precipitated the transmission of the 1870 Dance from Shasta to Karok, Yurok to Tolowa to Tututal. Friendship aided a California Shasta proselyting related Shasta and other tribes on the Siletz and Grand Ronde reservations in Oregon. La Barre reports (pp. 112, 116) that "marital ties have often . . . been the source of the spread of peyote"; the first Comanche user learned of peyote when he married an Apache woman; Rave's first converts were his Winnebago relatives; a Modoc in Oklahoma became a peyotist through marriage to a Quapaw.

[c] La Barre states (p. 59) that "the primary reason for Northern Cheyenne meetings is social."